



Review: [untitled]

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Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics by John Lyons

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discussion. Mlle. Guyot has bothered to draw brief but cogent comparisons with the mythological traditions of such neighboring peoples as the Araucanians and Patagonians (195-197). As well organized as the book is, I would recommend that it be read in the following manner: first, the Introduction (7-20); then the section on aims and methods (*Buts et Méthodes*, 21-27); and then skip immediately to the concluding chapter (191-197) before consulting the body of the text (29-189).

Art is not to be scrutinized too closely. While not meaning to depreciate its scientific value, I described this work in another review (*American Anthropologist* 71. 523-525) as something akin to art in the neatness of style of its analysis and formal presentation. It is only with respect to those details of analysis which weigh so heavily in the scales of professional linguists that this work is due for adverse criticism: the technical handling of the phonology and orthography is atrocious. I began to compile some examples of errata when it dawned on me that the whole matter had been so ill handled that it could not be adequately evaluated without debunking it entirely and plunging for a fresh start into the troublesome intricacies of Fuegian phonology. Perhaps ethnologist Guyot is not to be criticized too harshly, for she has borrowed wholly from the orthography and phonological analysis of F. Hestermann and M. Gusinde.⁵ Nevertheless, there are numerous flaws for which she cannot be excused, despite her unquestioning dependence upon erring tradition.

The system is patently pre-phonemic, and at best could be described as a broad phonetic transcription, adequate, in its ec-

⁵ F. Hestermann, *in*, Thomas Bridges, *Yamana-English, A Dictionary of the Speech of Tierra del Fuego*, for private circulation only. Mödling: Hestermann and Gusinde, 1933. Cf. also F. Hestermann, *Zur Transkriptionsfrage des Yahgan*, *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* 10.27-41 (1913). Cf. also M. Gusinde, *Das Lautsystem der Feuerländischen Sprachen*, *Anthropos* 21.1000-1024 (1926).

centric fashion, for the undemanding requirements of ethnological field notations, and attuned to a lay German ear. The Umlaut vowel series [ä, ë, ö], for example, does not exist in the Selk'nam inventory (cf. Glossary, 203-209). The most gross oversight on Mlle. Guyot's part was to attempt to adapt the Yamana phonological inventory from Hestermann and Gusinde (1933) and use it (1) for both Yamana and Selk'nam, apparently unrelated languages. In addition to the Umlaut vowel series, present in Yamana but absent in Selk'nam, the consonant [z] is absent in Selk'nam; and in Yamana appears only in the environment [r—], which makes me think this is one phonemic unit, actually a retroflex, voiced, groove spirant, or /z/. Additionally, [b], absent in Selk'nam but present in Yamana, is not included in Mlle. Guyot's table; and [n] and the glottal [ʔ], present in the glossaries for both languages, are also omitted. Nor is stress, which is indicated for some words and not for others in both tongues, specified as to whether it is true, phonemic stress or some sort of pitch accent. And, as though to crown a sorry mess with a supreme irony, the table, which purports to list "the principle phonemes of this system," does not even mention the vowel [a]—the most prevalent in both languages.

Of such is the stuff which irritates linguists, although in broad perspective it is perhaps of petty concern in light of the major theoretical contributions of this work to the semiotic structural study of myth and meaning in cultural analysis.

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INTRODUCTION TO THEORETICAL LINGUISTICS. By John Lyons. London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968. Pp. x, 519.

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This is the decade of the redress of past imbalances. This book attempts to compensate for the relative overemphasis on phonology and morphology and underem-

phasis on syntax and semantics contained in past introductory writings on general linguistics by devoting almost the entirety of its over 500 pages to the latter two domains of the field. Nor is the author doctrinaire in his approach to the subject. Although it is the generative-transformational viewpoint which is expressed most consistently in his chapters on syntax and (to a lesser extent) on semantics, he nevertheless develops other theoretical points of view at various points in a sympathetic and insightful way. He is particularly perceptive at spotting historical and theoretical connections among the various linguistic schools, particularly the connections between traditional and generative grammar. What will no doubt strike many readers as odd, however, is the fact that Lyons carefully develops the principles of structural linguistics in his earlier chapters as if they form the basis of generative-transformational linguistics as expounded in the later chapters. And, indeed, Lyons does show in Chapters 4-6 that generative rewrite rules capture the sorts of generalizations one obtains by employing structuralist methodologies. But when he really launches into actual problems of syntax, as in Chapters 7-8, the methodologies, so painstakingly developed, are thrown to the wind.

The highest praise, I think, one can heap on an introductory textbook in linguistics

is that it deserves to be considered as a replacement for, or at least a supplement to, Bloomfield's *Language*. This book deserves such consideration. Because of its failure to deal systematically with phonology, morphology, dialectology, historical linguistics, and several other topics for which Bloomfield's treatment remains unsurpassed, it is still merely a potential supplementary text, rather than a potential replacement. But in the areas where Lyons' book is strongest, syntax and semantics, Bloomfield is (in the general opinion of most linguists) weakest. Like Bloomfield, Lyons does not skirt difficult problems of linguistic analysis; he delves into them, and manages not to say anything absurd about them.

Lyons' chapters on semantics do not differ markedly from what he has had to say in his earlier book *Structural Semantics*.¹ Rather than review what he has to say on this topic here, let me simply refer the reader to my review of that book contained in Chapter 3 of my book *The London School of Linguistics*.²

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¹ *Structural Semantics: An Analysis of Part of the Vocabulary of Plato*. [Publication 20 of the Philological Society.] Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963.

² *The London School of Linguistics. A Study of the Linguistic Theories of B. Malinowski and J. R. Firth*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968, 69-75.